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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Argentina/USSR/Balkans

DATE:

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25X1 **SUBJECT** Soviet Control of Slav Groups in Argentina

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PAGES

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1. Until the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Argentina and Soviet Russia on 6 June 1946, the Pan-Slav movement in Argentina was directed from the Soviet Legation in Uruguay. The most active Soviet diplomat engaged in such activities was Valentin Vassilievitch Riabov, who held a consular-officer position in the Soviet Legation at Montevideo.
2. During this period the organization and merging of different Slav elements was handled by Dr. Tomas Davidov, a Bulgarian reportedly sent to Argentina for the express purpose of strengthening Communism among Slav groups and of uniting them under the "Slav Committee of Argentina".
3. Davidov was very successful in forming new "Aid Committees" and other front groups among the local Slavs, and managed to gain almost complete control over the Yugoslav and Bulgarian communities in Argentina. The Communists, under Davidov's orders, very quickly controlled the Yugoslav and Bulgarian clubs, societies, and organizations already existent, and then united these and the many new entities which they formed under master organizations called "Yugoslavia Libre" and "Bulgaria Libre", respectively.

Davidov did not find all the other Slav groups as pliable. He experienced considerable difficulty in the organization under the "Slav Committee" of the Polish, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, and other communities. Among other difficulties encountered were the following:

- a. The Poles feel a historical hatred toward Russia and have a deep-seated fear of Communism. Despite the fact that Davidov was helped by the local Polish Communist leader, Stanislaw Kowalewski, and that pressure was and is exerted on Polish citizens in Argentina by controlling their relatives residing in Poland, there still exists in Argentina a large number of violently anti-Communist Poles. The continued quasi-recognition by Argentina of the diplomatic representatives of the former Polish Government, and the existence of the anti-Communist Polish language newspaper, Kurjer Polski, have also helped the resistance of Communist domination of the local Poles.
- b. The Ukrainians have long desired independence, and this led many of them to support Germany during World War II. Many Ukrainians residing in Argentina hold the same belief, including the strongly anti-Communist groups called

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"Prosvita" and "Widrozenie" (sic). On the other hand, the Ukrainian Communists in Argentina were divided by bitter enmity into two factions: the Switlo group, led by Jose Tkaczuk and Jacobo Stepanenko, which adopted both a pro-Slav Committee and a pro-Jewish attitude; and the Ukrainska Gazeta faction, which opposed the Slav Committee and was violently anti-Semitic. The supporters of the Ukrainska Gazeta wanted no entanglement with the Argentine Communist Party through the Idiomatic Commission and the Slav Union. The Idiomatic Commission of the Argentine Communist Party is apparently the body through which liaison is maintained between the Argentine Communist Party and the different ethnic Communist groups. The Ukrainska Gazeta faction demanded that all funds collected for aid be sent to the mother country, and that none be diverted for financing Slav Communist activities in Argentina. In this attitude they were supported by Sergio Stapran through his newspaper, Russjik w Argentynie, and by the followers of D. Grigoriev and the "Byelorussian Center of Aid for the Fatherland." The Ukrainian Communists supporting the Ukrainska Gazeta were classed as Fascists by the Switlo faction. All of these factors caused considerable difficulty to Davidov in his attempt to organize and unify all Ukrainians under the Slav Committee.

- c. The Byelorussians are a fanatically Communist Slav group, but their intense hatred of the Poles caused them to look askance at any collaboration with the Polish Communists. Furthermore, the group known as "Byelorussian Center of Aid for the Fatherland", led by Dimitrio Grigoriev, closely collaborated with Sergio Stapran and the Ukrainska Gazeta faction. They strongly opposed the pro-Slav Committee, Byelorussian group led by Trofim Laszuk, the owner-editor of Nasz Golos.
5. Despite these difficulties, Davidov, with the help of Kowalewski, persisted in his plan of unification of the Slav groups, and successfully managed to wrest control of the Slav movement in Argentina from the Soviet Legation in Montevideo. At the same time, it appears that the Pan-Slav movement in Argentina was granted some measure of freedom from the Argentine Communist Party.
6. Shortly after the arrival in Buenos Aires of Ambassador Sergueev, Valentin Riabov was transferred from Montevideo to the Soviet Embassy in Buenos Aires. He immediately entered into close contact with the following: Davidov and Christo Gonevsky, the Bulgarian Communist leaders; Antonio Tulich and Pedro Zanetic, the Yugoslav Communist leaders; Miguel Rabyk, Jose Tkaczuk, and Jacobo Stepanenko, the Ukrainian Communist leaders; Stanislaw Kowalewski, the Polish Communist leader; and Trofim Laszuk, the Byelorussian Communist leader.
7. Although at first Riabov kept himself in the background, after the Slav Congress held in Buenos Aires on 1 and 2 November 1946 he began to take an active part in the Pan-Slav movement in Argentina. It was at this Slav Congress that a resolution was adopted changing the name of the "Slav Committee" to the "Slav Union of Argentina". On 2 March 1947 elections were held in almost all of the different Slav Communist organizations, and chiefly through Riabov's and Davidov's handling of matters, the results were a triumph for the supporters of the Slav Union.
8. Among the results of this triumph of the Slav Union are the following:
 - a. The newspaper Russjik w Argentynie will probably not reappear, at least not under the management of Sergio Stapran.
 - b. With the exception of Russian, Byelorussian, and Ukrainian Communist activities in Argentina, which will be directly supervised by the Soviet Embassy in Buenos Aires, official control of other Slav groups will be carried out through the Slav Union.
 - c. It seems probable that those groups previously opposing the Slav Union will be brought into line, and forced to follow a policy outlined for them by that organization.

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- d. The resounding victory of the Slav Union is expected to result in increased Slav Communist activities. Furthermore, the Slav Union is expected to exert even greater control over the activities of the different Slav communities in Argentina.
- e. The Byelorussians are expected to become the outstanding Slav group, and Riabov has reportedly declared that they will be a spearhead of Slav Communist activities in Argentina. It is not known as yet just how this will affect the local Bulgarian Communists who, up to the present time, have acted as the secret police of the Slav Union.
- f. A certain Francisco Novak (Nestoreczuk) has reportedly been assigned the task of unifying the Ukrainian Communist front, while Trofim Laszuk has become the undisputed leader of the Byelorussian Communists.

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